

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

CENTER FOR CANCER RESEARCH

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Room E17-110

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June 17, 1983

Dr. Frank Press
President, The National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20418

Dear Frank:

This letter, following our conversation, is to point out to you the imminent dangers arising from the recent successes in nuclear transplantation into mammalian eggs--in other words, cloning of individuals. The current work on rodents in Basel and at the Wistar in Philadelphia is not yet solid, but I predict the technique will be perfected in 6 to 12 months. From rodents to humans is only one small step.

Fifteen years ago Jim Watson and I, although we were skeptical of dangers from genetic engineering, pointed out that cloning of mammalian eggs, in contrast to the much larger amphibian eggs, was the only foreseeable but major danger. I believe the danger point is now.

The danger is double: to society, which may be exposed to foolish manipulations, and to science itself, because of attacks by well intentioned but confused groups. Already Mr. Rifkin has managed to confuse cloning with genetic engineering so as to condemn both.

May I suggest that the Academy Council consider this situation and take as promptly as possible whatever steps may seem desirable.

Cordially yours,

S. E. Luria, M.D.

SEL/mc